

**WASHINGTON** – The House of Representatives today passed a bill cosponsored by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell to direct the President to impose additional sanctions on persons who have knowingly provided assistance to Iran that would enable it to maintain or expand its production of refined petroleum resources.

H.R. 2194, The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009, passed by a bipartisan vote of 412-12 and is now pending before the Senate.

“Iran is already a very real and present conventional threat,” Mitchell said. “It is absolutely critical for the United States to work aggressively to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran poses not only a grave threat to Israel, but to the stability of the entire region. I believe that a threat to Israel is a threat to the United States, and I remain vigilant about ensuring our mutual safety and security.”

The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009 would state that, as a matter of U.S. policy, the U.S. should encourage foreign governments to cease all investment in and support of Iran's energy sector and exports of refined petroleum products to Iran. Specifically, the bill would direct the President to impose sanctions if a person has, with actual knowledge, made an investment of \$20 million or more that directly and significantly contributed to Iran's ability to develop its petroleum resources. Under current law the sanction thresholds are \$40 million.

Mitchell, who travelled to Israel in August to explore critical foreign policy and national security challenges facing both Israel and the United States, has also cosponsored H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009. H.R. 1327 would enable state and local governments to divest funds from companies that do significant business in Iran, as well as prohibit the investment of assets they control in companies that do significant business with Iran. The bill passed the House on October 14, 2009 by a bipartisan vote of 414-6 and is currently pending before the Senate.

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